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“At Cyberus Labs, we have chosen not to “patch a leaking ship” but to bring a new approach to some vexing cyber-security problems.” – Interview with Marek Ostafil, COO at Cyberus Labs

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*At **Cyberus Labs**, we have chosen not to “patch a leaking ship” but to bring a new approach to some vexing cyber-security problems. Right from the beginning we have set our own course – to focus on eliminating cyber-threats, and to deliver solutions that will be both secure and easy to use. Founded by three experienced international entrepreneurs (two from Silicon Valley, CA and one from Poland) Cyberus Labs was launched in 2015 in Krakow, Poland. The founders have strong backgrounds in cryptography, digital signal processing, audio-watermarking that was the inspiration of the Cyberus Key password-less user authentication system.*

What is the problem you are solving?

Passwords are the weakest link in cyber-security today. It is a broken and compromised system. On the one hand, companies are vulnerable to theft of credentials often resulting in both financial and reputational losses. On the other hand, users struggle to create, remember and input dozens of username/password combinations for the increasing number of online services that are part of their daily lives.

What is the solution you provide? How is it unique?

Our solution addresses head on the **vulnerabilities of passwords as an authentication method by eliminating them altogether**. Our flagship product is **Cyberus Key** – a revolutionary, **multi-patent pending user authentication system** that verifies a user to any online service with one-click of a mobile app. **Cyberus Key** uses **unbreakable cryptography method** to generate a one-time token that verifies both sides of any transaction (e.g. user to a website and vice versa). Cyberus Key eliminates this way phishing and “man-in-the-middle attacks. **Cyberus Key** will offer also user-to-machine and machine-to-machine authentication solutions for the Internet of Things (IoT) world, ensuring effective authentication and authorization that is the biggest obstacle for the growth of this whole industry.

What happened so far? What are the milestones that you have reached? What do you identify as your greatest accomplishment?

Cyberus Key system had its **world premiere in September 2016, at the CYBERSEC Forum 2016** – one of the most important cyber-security conferences in Central Europe. Right from the beginning our solution was very well received, we had a lot of very positive feedback and interest from both private and public sector. We have **MVP** on the market, as well as a **Mobile Only version** of our system. We are just **starting 4 pilot programs** with large multinational companies and we are engaged in talks about implementation and use cases with many other companies across Europe. We were invited to join the Cybersec HUB program that aims at promoting Polish cyber-security startups globally. We also have been selected from over 1,000 companies from all over the world to participate in [StartupBootcamp IOT& TechData](#) in Barcelona, Spain.

What are your next goals? Long term plans?

We are working intensively on **business development in Europe**. Right now we are engaged in implementation projects with different kind of companies – from international giants in the banking/financial sector to small to medium sized companies, in eCommerce, IoT and other industry sectors. Immediate goals include: sales growth and raising capital investment for national and international expansion. Longer term, one of our goals is to **create an ecosystem of companies from different industries that use Cyberus Key** as a user authentication system to enable their users to enjoy a truly secure and easy to use Single Sign On system.

Describe your team!

Cyberus Labs is a new kind of Polish company that is global in its DNA. Cyberus Labs was **co-founded by Silicon Valley and Polish entrepreneurs: George Slawek (CEO), Jack Wolosewicz (CTO) and Marek Ostafil (COO)**. Every one of us has its field of expertise and together we create a perfect match of experience, skills, knowledge that enables us to run the company, execute and deliver outstanding results. **George Slawek** has over 20 years of experience with global companies and technology startups in the US, the UK and in Poland. Over the last years he has successfully launched and managed three technology starts-ups in Silicon Valley. Prior to that, he spent 13 years with Bank of America in Capital Markets and Investment Banking. **Jack Wolosewicz** has a 25-year track record of pioneering new technologies, innovation and technology implementation. He has founded multiple technology startups in Silicon Valley and in Boston, Mass where he did his doctoral studies at MIT. His wide technical expertise includes: DRM and copyright protection, image and audio digital signal processing (DSP), secure communications and encryption. **Marek Ostafil** has 20 years of experience in managing international teams and projects. He has gained experience in Digital Sound Processing since '90 at the Electroacoustic Music Studio of the Music Academy in Kraków, Poland. He was a manager and co-organizer of many international projects in Europe that combined sound and new technologies. He worked also as an Associate Producer for Discovery Channel and RAI. Guest lecturer at the Jagiellonian University (Cracow Poland) and guest speaker on management and fundraising.

What makes you rocket?

There are few things. First of all – **a revolutionary technology** and its concept of Cyberus Key, developed by our CTO Jack Wolosewicz. Another is our approach of eliminating the use of user credentials that have any value to bad actors – we

decided to eliminate problem rather than participate in an „arms race” with hackers. And there is a **great team** – experienced international professionals in the fields of cyber-security, IT, business development, marketing, management, and finance.

What was the biggest difficulty in your business that you had to cope with so far? What are the areas that are the hardest to handle as a startup?

The biggest difficulty is the **cyber-security awareness among both: companies and end-users**. Despite the fact that the cyber attacks happen almost every day, **companies and users still think that this problem does not concern them**. They live under an illusion that they are safe using present authentication or login technologies. Well, they are not. They still do not fully realize the seriousness of cyber threats. Companies have and continue to invest in weak cyber-security solutions e.g. biometrics and as a result often are reluctant to spend more money on a more secure system.

I think all startups have a similar problem – **being small company with a relatively short history, it is sometimes difficult to convince the large players** that we can be partners and work together. There is this „David and Goliath” situation. But we see an increasing number of large companies willing to engage with startups. This is very encouraging and good for both – large companies and startups as both sides can profit from this partnership.

Who do you see the fintech ecosystem in the CEE region? What are the opportunities here?

CEE region has a **great potential** as a market. It is very **open to innovation and is developing quickly**. It is often a „testing ground” for large multinationals introducing innovation, new approaches or solutions that, if successful in smaller markets, are then rolled out globally. That is a great opportunity for us and early stage fintech companies to engage with large corporates.

On the other side there is a lot to do to create a real ecosystem that will help startups to grow, develop, learn and scale. EU or public money is not enough. Neither are just good intentions. **What is needed is to build a smart ecosystem, bringing together real experts in different fields**, large companies that really are interested in those cutting edge technologies and opened to work with startups, public sector that will not stand as an obstacle to a company’s survival or growth. And all those elements should be united by the entrepreneurial spirit, focus on doing business than formalities, innovation for its own sake and good looking statistics that are really a „vanity metrics” of how many startups have taken a part in, for example, acceleration programs and failing to define and measure the right KPIs.



Marek Ostafil – COO and Co-Founder of Cyberus Labs. He has 20 years of experience in managing international teams and projects. He

has gained experience in Digital Sound Processing since '90 at the Electroacoustic Music Studio of the Music Academy in Kraków, Poland. He was a manager and co-organizer of many international projects in Europe that combined sound and new technologies. He worked also as an Associate Producer for Discovery Channel and RAI. Guest lecturer at the Jagiellonian University (Cracow Poland) and guest speaker on management and fundraising. He has a Masters Degree in History of Art from the Jagiellonian University and a recipient of a scholarship from the International Center for Culture and Management (Salzburg, Austria).